(1)

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Forgot to copy my response

JAN 11TH, '91

DEAR HAROLD,

THANKS FOR THE KIND WORDS ABOUT MY WRITING. NO, I DON'T KNOW OLIVER STONE. I FIND HIM TO BE AN INTERESTING - YET MADDENING - FILMAKER WHOSE WORK I BELIEVE I UNDERSTAND. I NEVER SAID ALL OF HIS FILMS ARE BAD OR WORTHLESS - JUST IRRESPONSIBLE AND FULL OF DISINFORMATION. THE FACT THAT HE HAS APPOINTED HIMSELF THE GUARDIAN OF THE SIXTIES - A TIME IN WHICH I HAVE A PASSIONATE INTEREST - MAKES ME ILL. I HEAR HIS NEXT MOVIE MIGHT BE THE HARVEY MILK STORY. AS STONE IS MACHO AND HOMOPHOBIC - THIS SITUATION WILL PROVE VERY INTERESTING. THE GAY COMMUNITY IS GOING TO FIND HIM AMUSING - TO SAY THE LEAST.

YOU SAID DAD LEFT HOLLYWOOD "BECAUSE OF IT'S DISHONESTY AND CORRUPTION". WELL, THAT'S - SORT OF - WHY I LEFT HOLLYWOOD! ANOTHER LINK TO SIDNEY. WHEN DAD GOT SICK - A FEW PEOPLE WITH WHOM I WORKED AND WHO KNEW DAD - SAID IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM THEY'D HELP ME OUT. AFTER HE DIED - NOT ONE OF THEM LIFTED A FINGER TO HELP.

BACK THEN I TOOK IT PERSONALLY. NOW, I REALIZE IT WAS JUST HOLLYWOOD BUSINESS, AND BUSINESS AS USUAL AT THAT. YOU DON'T NEED ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT HOLLYWOOD. LONG BEFORE DAD PASSED AWAY - I HAD GOTTEN TIRED OF THE FALSE VALUES AND CARDBOARD DEPTH OF THE FILM COMMUNITY. IN HOLLYWOOD - IT'S WHO YOU KNOW AND WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THEM THAT COUNTS. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS.

SO - I LEFT. I BELIEVE LIONEL BARRYMORE SAID IT BEST: "IF YOU LOVE HOLLYWOOD - STAY HOME AND GO TO THE MOVIES. I LOVE FILM, ENJOY WRITING ABOUT IT, WORKING ON IT, OR READING ABOUT IT. I MAY RETURN TO COLLEDGE AND END UP AS A TEACHER OF FILM HISTORY.

MY SISTER, KATHY, MARRIED NICHOLAS WEBER IN 1976. THEY LIVE IN BETHANY CT. WITH THEIR TWO DAUGHTERS - MY NIECES - CHARLOTTE AND LUCY, AGE EIGHT AND TEN, NICK IS AN ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIVE - PRINCIPALLY THAT OF THE LATE JOSEPH ALBERS. HE ALSO WRITES. KATHY IS A WRITER OF BOOK REVIEWS (FOR PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES). SHE IS AT WORK ON HER FIRST NOVEL.

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MOM (NOW ALMOST 70) IS IN GREAT HEALTH AND LIVING IN LOS ANGELES - AS SHE HAS SINCE DAD PASSED AWAY. SHE WAS ACTIVE IN THE AUDEBON SOCIETY AND NOW DOES VOLUNTEER WORK AT CEDERS SINI HOSPITAL. SHE STILL TAKES GREAT PHOTOGRAPHS.

DAD WAS SOMEONE I KNEW WELL YET NOT AT ALL. THERE WAS A PRIVATE SIDE TO THE MAN BEYOND WHICH YOU COULD NOT GO. WE HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP - ESPECIALLY IN HIS LAST FEW YEARS - AND HE TAUGHT ME A LOT. I LOVED HIM.

YET I REALLY KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT HIM. HOW DID YOU MEET? WHAT WAS HE LIKE BACK THEN? WHAT KINDS OF THINGS WAS HE INTERESTED IN? I'D BE FASCINATED BY ANYTHING YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT THAT BRILLIANT, CONTRADICTORY MAN. AS I HAVE SAID - I FEEL I KNEW HIM WELL YET NOT AT ALL.

THE KENNEDY ASSASINATION IS ONE OF MY CARDINAL MEMORIES. I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A FASCINATION WITH THE MURDER. I BELIEVE IT TO BE ONE OF THE PIVOTAL MOMENTS IN MODERN HISTORY.

(4)

WITHOUT THE KILLING - WHAT WOULD'VE BEEN OUR HISTORY? WHAT OF VIET NAM? CIVIL RIGHTS? WHAT IF WATERGATE, THE IRAN-CONTRA SCANDAL AND THE RECENT GULF WAR HAD NOT HAPPENED? WHAT OF PRESIDENTS NIXON, JOHNSON, CARTER, REAGAN AND BUSH? I DON'T TRUST BUSH. SOMEONE WITH ALL OF THAT INTELLIGENCE BACKGROUND IS NOT A MAN IN WHOM I CAN PLEDGE MY FAITH. BUT I DON'T GET INVOLVED MUCH IN POLITICS.

SURE, I REMEMBER LIL WARMLY. SHE USED TO HAVE A CAT WHO THOUGHT SHE WAS LIL'S MOM. I REMEMBER HER AS FRIENDLY, DOWN TO EARTH AND GREAT WITH KIDS AS SHE WAS WITH ANIMALS. SAY HELLO FOR ME. IN FACT - I'D LOVE IT IF SHE FELT LIKE SENDING A NOTE!

WELL - YOU HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN READ THIS. MY BEST TO YOU AND LIL.

all love,
John R.

P.S. I'LL SEND YOU MY REVIEW OF JFK WHEN I SEE IT.